

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended) An encoding method for digital speech using strong and weak predictors for spectra vectors, comprising the step steps of:

- (a) replacing a strong predictor for a current frame following a preceding frame using a weak predictor with a weak predictor for said current frame; and
- (b) outputting the weak predictor for said current frame as the predictor for said current frame.

Claim 2 (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein:

- (a) said strong predictor and said weak predictor predict the Fourier coefficients for the pitch harmonics.

Claim 3 (previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein:

- (a) said strong predictor equals a multiple of the Fourier coefficients of a prior frame with the multiple in the range of 0.7 to 1.0; and
- (b) said weak predictor equals a second multiple of the Fourier coefficients of said prior frame with said second multiple in the range of 0.0 to 0.3.

Claim 4 (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein:

- (a) said step (a) of claim 1 replaces a second successive strong predictor with a corresponding second weak predictor.